

## Abstract

The present invention is drawn to a method and apparatus for using process exceptions to provide instant notifications for distributed processes. Process exception detection means are set-up at critical points in a process. The process exception detection means can be implemented using separate hardware, such as a PDA, or using software code added to existing systems, such as machine controllers. The process exception detection means monitors stimulus from information sources to detect exceptions that are then communicated to messaging controllers. The messaging controllers process the exception to instantly send a notification and the contextual information needed to respond to the notification to an appropriate recipient. Escalating communication schemes are used for both exceptions and notifications to further fault tolerance.